

Tub Bath

Was it Bonnard married his model
and painted her forty years
out of the 19th C.
into the troubled one
where we find ourselves, tonite, breathing
the image of a woman
rising
from a wooden tub?

I know by heart
the poem Lawrence wrote of
Frieda rising -- her breasts
in the sunlight were yellow
roses.

I've read it aloud to you
nights we were alone together
more than once.

I have my precedents
the students of the age, once it has passed,
will scoff perhaps that a man wrote
a poem for you taking
a tub bath.

Your long arms towel
your pear-shaped breasts
and round ass, your long hair
falls like a rush
light to my heart.

I drew the water by
bucket, split the wood
for the stove.

Students of the age be damned.

Nebraska

The sun aglow like a live coal
in the pit of a passed
pipe laid aside and growing cold
on the dashboard
of the horizon. The arroyo
of a parched canto
on the crackt lips of a gas
jockey, "Fill 'er up?"

A Coke
and candy bar supper. Local yokels

cruising up and down, back
and forth, north, south, east
and west the wide sundown streets
of Ogallala, Nebraska.

Here, Black Elk

once stood
at the center of the
world
and wept for his people.

the peace broken
like a stick .

Three Dollars

The double ax makes a crutch
of the alder it will cut
when I snuff the firefly butt
that flits and puffs
between my hands and smoky mouth.
Let the fools crash
and curse ahead
destroying what's left of the wild earth
for three dollars a goddam hour.

I'm less a man enuf
to sit and huff a while
upon a bare rock
next a lone withered foxglove,
seedpods crackt like broken bells
lost of summer's purple tone;
shaken in the wind, brown seeds fall
like gold from an alchemy cup.

Crawling

How to keep Albion from eating
cigar butts, razor blades, bottle caps, dog shit
and a lot of other words -- supposed
to keep my eye on him

So, we go out
into the dry sun, sit
in the brittle
grass to share
a green apple.